

# Motivational Studies in Second Language Learning: Theories Review on Bibliographic Essay.

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## ABSTRACT

The concept of motivation cuts across all areas of human endeavour. It has become a focus of research, especially in the area of second language learning. Thus, this work is set to do a bibliographic essay of motivational studies in second language learning. The purpose is to review and bring to the fore the theories and issues raised by various proponents in the field. The study highlights the proponents and their various theories, and then discusses them respectively. This study is not restricted to a chronological pattern of discussion, rather, the theories are discussed as needful as each is to the purpose of this study. The method used in this study is a thorough reading of extant literatures in the area of motivational studies in language learning.

**Key Words:** Motivation, motivation in second language learning, theories of motivation

## INTRODUCTION.

Motivation has been strongly acclaimed to play a significant role in second language learning. Sometimes, learners (of second language) are enthusiastic to learn second (or foreign) language because they are propelled by their curiosity to gain some social or economic reward through the target language community. Solak (2012) argues that motivation is a driving force that guides one to achieve the goals that are already set. He further maintains that it is what pushes an individual to strive for ultimate success. For Vibulphold (2016), motivation is the force that kick-starts a machine, lubricates the parts, and fuels the engine in order to keep running. The implication here, is that it takes motivation for an individual to start and maintain the course of learning a language. The position above is in consonance with the idea of scholars (Dornyei, 2001, Gardner, 2007, Palmer, 2009) who believe that motivation keeps a learner going in the face of challenges. For Zhao (2011), motivation is what gives the explanation to why people decide to do something, how hard they go after it and how willing they are to sustain the activity. Liu and Chen (2015) are of the view that motivation, alongside language aptitude, is a strong determinant for language learning. Similarly, Hussan, Salim, and Farid (2020) posit that motivation is the major factor in adult learners of EFL and ESL. Jiao, Jin, You, and Wang (2022) view motivation as the main willingness of students' second language learning.

The first section of this study defines motivation as postulated by some scholars in the field. The other sections discuss the theories and the issues raised by them as regards motivation in second language learning. Thus, we want to state that this paper is aimed at examining motivation in light of researches that have been carried out, to show its role in second language learning.

## Definition of Motivation.

Motivation can be said to be the learner's orientation with regards to the goals of learning a second language

(Crook and Schmidt, 1991). Dornyei and Skehan (2005) assert that motivation concerns the direction and magnitude of human behaviour, or more especially, the choice of a particular action, the persistence with it, the effort expended on it. This definition, therefore, implies that motivation is responsible for why people choose to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity, and how hard they are willing to pursue it. On his part, Gardner (1985) defines motivation as the 'extent to which the individual strives or works to learn the language because of the desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in the activity.' We observe from this definition, that motivation is goal-directed, that is the learners' immediate goal is to learn the language. According to Gardner (1985), a highly motivated individual will want to learn the language, enjoy learning the language, and strive to learn the language.

### Theories of Motivation.

In this section, we shall discuss theories of motivation as propounded by Gardner and Lambert (1972), Gardner (1985; 1993), Schumann (1997), Noels (2001), Dornyei and Skehan (2005), MacIntyre (2005), Brown (2007).

Gardner and Lambert (1972), and Gardner (1985; 1993) were the pioneer studies carried out in the area of motivation in the second language learning. Gardner and Lambert (1972) maintain that some people have the knack for languages, while others do not. For Gardner and Lambert, attitude and motivation might be the key for successful language learning. Consequently, acquiring a second or foreign language is affected by the attitude and readiness of the learner. The underlying tenet in Gardner and Lambert (1972) postulation are that attitude of the learner towards the L2 community and the motivation behind learning the language are of great significance on the learner's ability to learn the language.

Gardner (1985) further identified two distinct orientations for learning a language: **integrative** and **instrumental**. Integrative orientation (goal) refers to a learner's desire to learn more about the cultural community of the target language or to assimilate, to some degree, in the target community. Hence, integrative orientation refers to a desire to increase the affiliation with the target community. Oluikpe and Oluikpe (2014) maintain that in integrative orientation, the learner has a positive attitude towards the L2 community and because of this positive attitude, he is desirous of interacting with and behaving like them. The assertion above is in consonance with the position of Faulks (1978) that individuals who are most successful when learning a target language are those who like the people that speak the language, admire the culture and have a desire to become familiar with or even integrate into the society in which the language is used. That is to say that when someone becomes a resident in a new community that uses the target language in its social interaction, integrative motivation is the key component in assisting the learner to develop some level of proficiency in the language. More so, integrative orientation becomes a necessity for the individual to operate socially in the community and becomes one of its members. Finegan (1999) posits that integrative motivation typically underlies successful acquisition of a wide range of registers and native-like pronunciation. According to Benson (1991), a more appropriate approach to the concept of integrative motivation in the EFL context would be the idea that it represents the desire of the individual to become bilingual, while at the same time becoming bicultural. This happens through the addition of another language and culture to the learner's own cultural identity. This is also applicable to other learners of every other language.

On the other hand, instrumental orientation has a utilitarian value. Here, the learner's primary concern in learning the language is motivated by the gains L2 proficiency may afford him. Hudson (2000) argues that instrumental orientation on its part, is generally characterized by the learners' desire to obtain something practical or concrete from studying a second language. This is to say that with instrumental motivation, the purpose of learning a language is more utilitarian, such as meeting the requirement for school or university graduation, applying for a job, requesting higher pay based on language ability, reading technical materials, translating works, or achieving higher social status. We can therefore generalize that instrumental

motivation often involves a second language learning condition where little or no social integration of the learner into a target language community takes place, or sometimes even desired.

Following on from Gardner's (1985) hypothesis, it is obvious that integratively-orientated learners were more persistently and intensely motivated than instrumentally-oriented learners. Furthermore, an integratively-oriented learner would likely have a stronger desire to learn the language, have more positive attitude towards the learning situation, and be likely to expend more effort in learning the language. However, both integrative and instrumental orientations are important. Thus, a student (second language learner) can learn a second language well with an integrative motivation or with instrumental motivation, or even with both. Consequently, one orientation does not rule out the other.

Gardner (1993) postulated two paradigms in the study of motivation. They are: **orientation motivation** and **core motivation**. The motivation at the orientation level involves the learner's orientation to the language, and the learner's attitude towards the learning situation. On the other hand, he described core second language motivation as a construct composed of three characteristics: the attitude towards learning a language, referred to as 'affect', the desire to learn the language, referred to as 'want'; and motivational intensity, referred to as 'effort'. Gardner (1993) maintained that in order to understand why the learners are motivated, it is necessary to understand the learner's ultimate goal or purpose for learning the language; this is what he referred to as the learner's orientation. As pertaining to language classroom, the learning situation could include variables such as the teachers, the text books, the classroom activities, classmates, etc. The learners' attitude towards these variables will influence the learners' core motivation as well as the learners' orientation. Thus, positive attitudes towards the learning situation will likely produce much enjoyment in the study of the language, desire to learn the language and the effort given in the study of the language.

It is important to note that Gardner's theory emphasized more of the social aspect of the learning than the role of motivation in the classroom. He approached his study as a social psychologist. As a social psychologist, Gardner was concerned with effect of social variables on learner's motivation. On the other hand, language teachers are concerned with effect of the syllabus, lesson plans and activities that students experience in the classroom. Because a second language is almost always learned in an education setting, many researchers have attempted to adopt Gardner's theory and other theories of motivational psychology and apply them to educational situations.

Crooks and Schmidt (1991) questions Gardner's approach, maintaining that the empirical evidence is not clear enough to support the integrative motivation as a cause and second language achievement, the effect. They state that its emphasis on social aspect is a limiting feature, and also discuss the needs for approaches that are more situated to second language education. Crooks and Schmidt (1991) identified a clear need to research and classify second language motivation as it relates directly to the classroom. Thus, they identify four areas of second language motivation:

- the micro level
- the classroom level
- the syllabus level
- factors from outside the classroom.

The micro level involves the cognitive processing of second language input. Here, the learner's motivation is shown by the amount of attention given to input. The classroom level includes the techniques and activities employed in the classroom. They also applied tenets of expectancy value and self-determination theories to this level, stating that expectancy of success and the amount of control over activities contribute to learners' motivation. The syllabus level refers to the choice of content presented and can influence motivation by the level of curiosity and interest aroused in the students.

Factors from outside the classroom involve informal interaction in the second language.

Taylor, Meynand and Rheault (1977) maintain that while both integrative and instrumental motivations are essential elements of success when learning a second language, it is integrative motivation which has been found to sustain long-term success. This assertion corresponds with Gardner and Lambert's (1972) view of integrative motivation being of more relevance in a formal learning environment than instrumental motivation. Consequently, integrative motivation is still being emphasized than instrumental motivation. Whereas instrumental motivation has only been recognized as an important factor in some research, integrative motivation is constantly linked to successful second language learning. Sometimes, students are instrumentally motivated in the study of language (probably, just to pass examinations), however, those who are integratively motivated in language study are usually more successful in learning.

Instrumental motivation can be seen to be successful in the situation where the learner is not given the opportunity to use the target language, and therefore has no chance to interact with members of the target group. This assertion is in line with the study of Lukmani (1972) who observes that an instrumental orientation was important than integrative orientation in non-westernized female learners of English as second language (ESL) in Bombay. The social situation helps to determine what kind of orientation learners have and what kind is most important for language learning. Kachru (cited in Brown, (2000) also pointed out that in India where English has become an international language, it is a common thing for second language learner to be successful with instrumental purposes as their main reason for studying.

Brown (2000) points out clearly that both integrative and instrumental motivations are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Learners do not often choose one form of motivation when learning a second language, but rather a combination of both orientations. He buttresses his point using an example of international students residing in the United States learning English for academic purposes (EAP) while at the same time wishing to become integrated with people and culture of the country.

Oluikpe and Oluikpe, (2014) posit that education shift-centered research has led to new orientation in research paradigm from 1990s to date. They maintain that the reason is because the focus of research is to examine the situation-specific motivational force of language learning as a progressive social activity. Consequently, in the next section, we shall discuss these new paradigms in motivational studies in L2 contexts.

### **Neurobiological Research.**

This theory is propounded by Schumann (1997). According to Dornyei and Skehan (2005), Schumann (1997) made the first attempt in incorporating the findings of Neurosciences in the second language studies. He maintains that the section of the temporal lobes in the brain called amygdala is responsible for linking the emotional parts of the brain (affect) with language learning. Furthermore, the amygdale makes it possible for us to appraise stimulus. This stimulus appraisal occurs in the amygdale through the dimension of self and social image, novelty, coping potential, goal need significance, and pleasantness. These points listed above correspond with Brown (2007) position that:

If you see or hear or taste something, the amygdale helps you decide whether or not your perception is novel, pleasant, relevant to your needs, goals, manageable (you can potentially cope with it), and compatible with your own social norms and self-concept (175).

Schumann (1997), after all, concludes that positive appraisals of language learning situation enhances learning while negative appraisals of language learning situation inhibits second language learning.

### **Self-determination Theory.**

Noels (2001) is the proponent of this theory. The theory examines second language learning from the perspective of the rewards it provides (intrinsic and extrinsic), and the perspective of goal-setting, which may also be either intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. This theory is geared towards examining how intrinsic or extrinsic motivations relate to instrumental and integrative orientation in goal setting in second language classroom. Hence, it is derived from this theory that applying the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can help in organizing language learning goals systematically.

From the constructivist perspective, the emphasis of this theory is on the role of attitude in motivation. Since one's attitude towards a target determines one's personal response to the target, attitude, therefore, controls people's behaviour. This assertion implies, therefore, that a positive attitude motivates, while negative attitude demotivates (inhibits learning).

Dornyei and Skehan (2005) criticize Noel's (2001) self-determination theory alongside Locke and Lathan (1990) **goal theory**, Weiner (1992) **attribution theory**, maintaining that:

- they are reductionist in orientation
- they do not account for unconscious motives
- they fail to integrate emotional Influence in the main cognitive paradigm
- they treat one type of action and its underlying motives without addressing the interplay of multiple parallel influence on human behavior
- they fail to address the complex interrelationship of the individual organism, the individual's environment, and the broader socio- cultural context
- they fail to account for the diachronic nature of motivation; that is, describing motivational process as they occur in time

From these criticisms, it can, therefore be said that these theories are inadequate to account for motivation in educational context, following the fact that there are many variables to consider in motivation in educational context.

Consequently, Dornyei and Skehan (2005) identifies some aspects of motivation that require attention in any comprehensive theory of motivation. They include:

- general motive concerning second language-related values, beliefs and attitudes
- learner's specific motives, such as self-confidence and self-esteem
- motives rooted in the social micro-context of the classroom such as the informal class norms designated by the peer group
- the teacher's motivational influence
- the motivational character of the curriculum and the teaching materials
- the distracting effects of alternative actions
- the learner' self-regulatory activity to control his or her own motivational state.

### **Motivational Self- regulation Theory.**

Dornyei and Skehan (2005) propounded this theory. This theory deals with training the language learners to have appropriate knowledge and skill to motivate to themselves, and have the skill that enables them subdue environmental distractions. Dornyei and Skehan (2005) provide a typology of motivational strategies classified into five categories as:

- Commitment control strategies

- metacognitive control strategies
- satiation control strategies
- emotion control strategies
- environmental control strategies.

These motivational strategies above are similar to Oxford's (1990) learning strategies.

### **Willingness to Communicate.**

Maclintyre (2005) propounded this theory, examining the second language speaker's willingness to participate or withdraw from communication in second language. Researches carried out in the area of willingness to communicate are focused on explaining the factors that determine the individual's willingness to engage in discourse at a particular time with a specific person or group of persons.

Brown (2007) categorized theories of motivation into three major schools of thought. They are: **behaviourist**, **cognitivist**, and **constructivist**. From the behaviourist perspective, emphasis is on the anticipation of reward. Here, people are motivated to do things because of the reward they expect to get. It is worthy of note that 'reward' informs what is referred to as '**self-determination theory**' in cognitive psychology. Here, it is maintained that reward as a driving force for motivation may be either intrinsic or extrinsic. Thus, an action that is intrinsically motivated usually expects a reward in the form of satisfaction for an accomplished self-imposed and self-controlled task. Brown's position, here, implies that intrinsically motivated action is self-imposed (decided upon by self), self-controlled (regulated, planned and executed by self). On the other hand, in the extrinsically motivated action, the anticipated reward may be money, prizes, grades, or other type of positive feed backs.

From the cognitive point of view, the emphasis on motivation is placed on individual's decisions, choices, goals, efforts needed to achieve the goal.

Finally, from the constructivist point of view, the emphasis is on the role of attitude in motivation since one's attitude towards a target determines one's personal response to target.

### **CONCLUSION**

Motivation is an important factor in second language learning. Hence, it is important to identify both the type and combination of motivation that assists in the successful learning of a second language. Furthermore, it is necessary to view motivation as one of a number of variables in an intricate model of interrelated individual and situational factors which are unique to each language learner. Consequently, at this point, it is worthy to note that both integrative and instrumental motivation may lead to success, but lack of either of them can inhibit language learning.

In spite of the studies examined in this work, we shall not claim to have exhausted all that there is in the field of motivation in second language learning, hence, there is still room for further studies in the area.

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